

May 25, 2016

Roger A. Felix Jr.
37 Fenderson St
Caribou, Maine 04736

Committee on Taxation
C/O Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Lawmakers

Thank you for serving our great state as a member of the Committee on Taxation, and for motivating the state in passing into law the elimination of Maine tax on military pensions. I and my fellow Maine Veterans applaud your hard work because these types of actions will only enhance our ability to have more of our retired Veterans return and make Maine their permanent home.

As this and other changes are steps in the right direction to ensuring Maine is looked at as a Veteran friendly state. As we continue moving forward I would like to bring to your attention some other items that need to be addressed at the state level. These recommendations will ensure we keep Veterans issues at the top of the list for review in Maine.

My first proposal is to change the current laws governing the Maine Property Tax Exemption to allow all disabled Veterans to be included in the Law. Under current law the only way to receive an exemption is to be rated 100% total disabled / service connected disabled or be over the age of 62. All Veterans regardless of percentage of service connected disability and or age should be allowed to receive this exemption. Recommend Maine add a way to include all service connected Veterans in this law so all can benefit each year in a small reduction of their homeowners taxes. I am not recommending everyone get the same amount of reduction, I would like to see it based on the percentage of disability, for instance if your rating is 70% then you would get 70% of the current \$6000 exemption and so on. It only seems fair to give all Veterans that are receiving a disability rating from the VA the same honor and distinction as someone who is rated 100%.

Continuing on Disabled Veterans I also would like to recommend that the current policy from the state outlining the definition of disabled veteran be updated in the laws governing the Department of Motor Vehicles for Maine. Under current law the only person who can be granted the ability to be issued disabled veteran plates are those listed 100% disabled, and again I ask why are we not allowing those veterans who are rated at a lower percentage to also be given the same right to be issued the plate when in fact they are just what the plate says Disabled Veteran? I attempted to rectify this issue earlier this year by sending a letter to the Secretary of State regarding this issue and was respectfully informed that the issue would have to be taken up with the Legislative branch due to the current policy being in law. So now I am reaching out to you in a hope that the state can see fit to change its policy to allow all Veterans who have a documented VA disability rating to be authorized the disabled Veteran plate regardless of percentage they are rated.

This now brings me to my last recommendation that also goes along with disabled veterans, in that I would like to see the elimination or a discount in reference to excise tax on the primary vehicle for all Service connected disabled and military retired Veterans in Maine. If we can get more Maine Veterans to make Maine their final home it would only increase revenue since most of the retired vets buy homes and would only take the savings given from the discounts and spend it in their local community to support future economic growth. Eliminating the registration fee for a 100% disabled Veteran is a very small exemption compared to the massive amounts they could also save if we could eliminate the excise tax on just one vehicle.

I am not recommending that the state had out money to Veterans just because they are vets, or make a new type of welfare that we already have way too much of in the state already. What I am recommending is the ability to take the existing policies and make them fair and obtainable for all veterans currently serving and for those have served this great state.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger A. Felix Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roger A. Felix Jr
U.S Army Retired

c/c Committee of Veterans affairs

Rep Carol McElwee , Caribou

Sen Perter Edgecomb, Aroostook County